

**From:** Chuck Jake [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 13, 2015 3:54 PM  
**To:** City Clerk  
**Subject:** Message to Mayor and council re Trestle

Ms Toni Traber, City Clerk, City of San Jose  
Please distribute. Thank you

Message to: San Jose Mayor Sam Liccardo, Members of the City Council

From: Chuck Jacobson, Retired Engineer, San Jose Resident

Subject: 3 Creeks Trail Trestle

Date 5/13/15

The purpose of this message is reaffirming my support of the City Council decision to replace the Trestle on Three Creeks Trail. My concerns for the effort of others to preserve the trestle as a historical structure are;

1. 1. A recent op-ed in the Mercury News re the wooden trestle said “With proper maintenance, it should last for generations.....”. Does the City have the expertise and talent to perform proper maintenance and if not, is it available by contract and at reasonable cost?
2. Is the trestle a fire hazard? Already there have been a number of fires at this trestle in recent years. A Google search of trestle fires results in listing of numerous trestle fires around the country, including a serious one near Sacramento (March 2007).
3. Are the funds available for this project under time constraints? Time constrains that might not be met if the plans for replacement were changed to refurbishment?

I wonder what the maintenance policy is of major rail lines are regarding wooden trestles. If not already done, would it be appropriate for the City to contact the BNSF maintenance director to learn their maintenance policy of wooden trestles?

I believe that the city is planning to provide historical features honoring the history of the Western Pacific rail spur that is the route of the western and eastern alignments of the Three Creeks Trail. The trestle is just one part of that spur

Sincerely,

Charles Jacobson

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

**From:** Richard Mindigo [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Saturday, May 16, 2015 10:42 PM  
**To:** City Clerk  
**Subject:** Willow Glen Trestle

*Please forward this request to the Mayor and members of the City Council. Thank you.*

Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council:

I had an office and did environmental consulting in San Jose for over 30 years. I am writing in support of saving and restoring the Willow Glen Trestle. The wooden trestle is rare, interesting and part of the City's history that once removed cannot be replaced.

My family goes back four generations in South Dakota where we own a cabin. The following trestle is one of many on the 109 mile long Mickelson Trail in the Black Hills that was built on the former Burlington Northern railway right of way. The trail is in the Rails to Trails Hall of Fame and is an attraction to locals as well as visitors from all over the country.



<http://gfp.sd.gov/state-parks/directory/mickelson-trail/docs/mickelson-trail-guide.pdf>

Please save the Willow Glen trestle so that it can become a local treasure.

Sincerely,

Richard Mindigo



**From:** [City Clerk](#)  
**To:** [Agendadesk](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Willow Glen Trestle  
**Date:** Monday, May 18, 2015 3:06:39 PM

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-----Original Message-----

From: Scott Miller and Janet Burdick [REDACTED]  
Sent: Monday, May 18, 2015 3:03 PM  
To: City Clerk  
Subject: Willow Glen Trestle

Please forward this message to Mayor Liccardo and the city council:

When my family took a trip across the United States in 1996, our children noticed which towns and cities were bland could-be-anywhere and which were intriguing and made us feel that we were understanding that areas particular flavor and history. Our daughter was only 9 and our son 13, but they were aware of a sense of place.

It seems that the Council would prefer to have a prefabricated steel bridge instead of utilizing the trestle that is already present - a large reminder of the importance of railroads in this country, of the local canning industry, of a time when wood was the predominant building material. From what I have read, the trestle will be less expensive, the creek bed will be less disturbed by leaving it in place, and there is no group who are supporting the steel bridge other than the Council.

As an artist who has seen the trestle and walked over the steel bridge on another part of the trail, I can't imagine any visual benefit of a steel bridge except conformity. Having visited walking trails with bridges in Ashland, Oregon and Shasta City, California as well as having traveled in Australia, Europe, India, Mexico, and South America, I can think of the satisfaction of walking over wood or stone bridges as well as their beauty and charm. No one is asking for another Sun Dial Bridge at Turtle Bay like the one in Redding, but we want something that stays in the mind rather than a merely functional bridge since that possibility already exists.

I want to be able to take my grandchildren over the trestle bridge, to talk with them about trains and growing fruit in The Valley of Heart's Delight, to give them memories of the past like they get when they visit their mother's native Ireland. A bland bridge will evoke no sense of place.

Sincerely,

Janet Burdick  
[REDACTED]

**From:** [City Clerk](#)  
**To:** [Agendadesk](#)  
**Subject:** FW: willow Glen Trestle  
**Date:** Monday, May 18, 2015 3:35:56 PM

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**From:** Blanca Alvarado [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, May 18, 2015 3:36 PM  
**To:** City Clerk  
**Subject:** willow Glen Trestle

PLease forward my support for Historic Landmark designation of the Willow Glen Trestle to Mayor Liccardo and the City Council.

Thank You.

Blanca Alvarado

Former Councilmember/County Supervisor

John Davidson, City of San José  
via email, May 18, 2015

cc: Barry Ng, Interim Director, Public Works  
Harry Freitas, Director Planning, Building and Code Enforcement  
Angel Rios, Jr. Interim Director, Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services  
Matt Cano, Interim Assistant Director  
Brian Grayson, Preservation Action Council of San José (PAC\* SJ)  
Susan Brandt-Hawley, lawyer for Friends of the Willow Glen Trestle

re: Memo re: Agenda Item 4.5, May 19th Council Meeting.

Mr. Davidson,

For the record, I would like to respond to a number of points raised in the staff memo dated 5/12/15 to Council for Agenda Item 4.5, regarding "Actions Related to the Three Creeks Trail Pedestrian Bridge Project" (<http://sanjoseca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/43676>). Due to time constraints and for ease of reading, I'll limit myself to only a couple key points concerning the memo and the related "Environmental Impact Report for the Three Creeks Trail Pedestrian Bridge Project" (EIR).

## Public Outreach

The memo states in the Executive Summary that "[o]n four separate occasions - March 26, 2013; April 9, 2013; August 13, 2013 and January 14, 2014, the Mayor and Council approved actions (or agreed to not re-consider actions) related to the removal of the existing trestle bridge and replacement with a new free-span bridge over Los Gatos Creek." The agenda notices for some of those meetings were deceptively worded: the public was given little opportunity to be involved in the discussion.

- The first meeting, March 26th, was Agenda Item 5.1, listed as: "Grant Applications to the State of California for the Three Creeks Trail Pedestrian Bridge Development." The only mention of the trestle was item (b)-1: "Increase the Trail: Three Creeks Interim Improvements & Trestle Bridge appropriation to the Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services Department in the amount of \$1,188,000" – no indication that the Council actually was going to decide to demolish the trestle rather than improve it.
- The second meeting, April 9th: Agenda item 2.17: "Agreement with CH2M Hill, Inc., for Various City Trail Projects" on the Consent Calendar didn't mention the trestle at all: the agreement was described as "in order to provide services for the Three Creeks Trail Pedestrian Bridge project."

This has all been so obtuse that the Mercury News wrote two different editorials decrying this lack of transparency:

- [http://www.mercurynews.com/opinion/ci\\_23209059/mercury-news-editorial-willow-glen-trestle-deserves-another](http://www.mercurynews.com/opinion/ci_23209059/mercury-news-editorial-willow-glen-trestle-deserves-another), "Mercury News editorial: Willow Glen trestle deserves another look" (5/9/13): "Even the City Council's March 26 agenda item was all grant-jargon gobbledygook, obscuring the fact that whacking the trestle was the point."
- [http://www.mercurynews.com/opinion/ci\\_23671895/mercury-news-editorial-willow-glen-trestle-replacement-needs](http://www.mercurynews.com/opinion/ci_23671895/mercury-news-editorial-willow-glen-trestle-replacement-needs), "Mercury News editorial: Willow Glen trestle replacement needs public participation" (7/16/13): "it was clear that San Jose's outreach on the demolition plan had been -- oh, let's just say it: rigged."

Despite this lack of transparency, a few members of the public did manage to find out about the issue and to provide some timely comment. I was out-of-town and so could not speak in person, but I did submit an email in time for the first meeting, the receipt of which was acknowledged (see the Appendix). I did speak in person at the second meeting, only to have Councilmember Oliverio (D6) tell me that I had missed my chance to “speak” at the prior meeting. Then, ever after, the Councilmember repeatedly stated that I had had two opportunities to give comment.

The August 13, 2013 agenda notice was even less informative: “2.3 (a): Approval of Council Committee Reports – Rules and Open Government Committee Report of May 15, 2013.” We in the community were prepared for this meeting: over a dozen of us spoke, with public discussion lasting for over an hour. This prompted Councilmember Oliverio to give a 19-minute-long lecture from the dais about wasting the Council’s time at which he singled me out by name multiple time. (A link to a video of that lecture is still featured on the official <http://www.sjdistrict6.com/> webpage: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player\\_embedded&v=DQF2xA-Oems](https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=DQF2xA-Oems).)

As noted in the 5/12/15 memo, “[o]n August 12, 2013, City staff issued another information memorandum which detailed the public outreach that had occurred to date on the project.” While it is true that there were a series of well-attended public meetings, the public was not permitted to discuss the trestle at those meetings: we were only allowed to talk about things like the designs of the railing and the patterns in the pavement of the prefab replacement bridge. All questions regarding the trestle were ruled out-of-bounds.

The January 14, 2014 meeting is where the Council declared that they could rule any structure to be historic or not historic, regardless of any relevant information provided by knowledgeable and informed members of the public. The Council then promptly declared the trestle to be “not historic” and therefore it could be demolished without creating an unmitigatable impact. This is what prompted the suit by the Friends of the Willow Glen Trestle and the Preservation Action Council of San José: the loss of a historic structure can not be mitigated by the placement of a mere plaque.

I bring all this up “for the record”, and because the 5/12/15 memo calls attention to all the opportunities for the public to provide comment.

## Four Reasons

The Executive Summary of the 5/12/15 memo lists four reasons for staff to continue recommending the prefab bridge. Let me address them here:

(1) Uncertainty of construction costs and timeline for rehabilitation. The City commissioned an engineering report in 2012 (included as Appendix G in the EIR). That report went into incredible detail, with diagrams of every board and bolt in the trestle, highlighting which ones needed to be repaired or replaced and which were fine as is. That analysis also included a “detailed estimate” – pages of itemized parts and actions, down to the number of bolts and washers and how many hours it takes to install the sprinkler system. In contrast, the estimates for demolishing the trestle and installing the prefab bridge are given in less detail, with incredibly low estimates for the time needed to safely remove of the trestle sub-structure.

Regarding the timeline, some background history: The trail by Lonus that the trestle or prefab bridge is to connect to was constructed in 1984. However, it was a dead-end segment and was fenced off for most of the time until the trail was eventually extended and officially opened in 2009. The public

patiently waited 25 years just to use that short segment of trail: we can surely wait a little longer to assure that the connecting bridge is done right.

BTW: The County established the Los Gatos Creek Streamside Park Committee in 1975 to coordinate and advocate for the creation of the Los Gatos Creek Trail. I was officially appointed to the Committee in 1984 by then-Supervisor Zoe Lofgren. From my years of experience on the Los Gatos Creek Streamside Park Committee, I have found that funding frequently manages to appear once worthy plans have been developed. The State currently has Cap-and-Trade funding for transportation improvements that reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, and so funding for a trail connection to the Diridon VTA/CalTrain/BART/High-speed-rail Station would seem to be a worthy candidate for grant funding.

(2) Annual resources for inspection and maintenance would be considerably more for rehabilitation. In the EIR, Appendix G, page 5.7: The inspection every other year for the prefab bridge can be done in a day for a cost of \$1,000, whereas it might take a couple days and cost \$4,000 to inspect the trestle. The trestle requires "specialized equipment": a ladder, a drill, and a hammer.

(3) Risk of loss of critical trail system access is high for rehabilitation. Given that we've waited decades for this trail connection, I'm glad to see it is now finally considered to be "critical"(!) The risk of loss is low: the trestle was built to carry freight trains, so it's not likely to just tip over now. It has withstood earthquakes and fires for 90+ years. And the rehabilitation plans include a plethora of fire-prevention measures – sprinklers, alarms, fire-retardant treatments, and debris removal.

(4) Over \$1,000,000 in time limited grant funding would likely be lost. One of the driving issues has been the deadline for a Proposition-40 Roberti-Z'Berg grant. This grant was given to San José to purchase land to extend the Three Creeks Trail eastward towards Kelley Park. It was redirected to the trestle by the Council's action of March 26, 2013. I understand that the City is negotiating with State Senator Jim Beall to get an extension on the deadline. From my informal conversations with the Senator, I believe that it would also be possible to again redirect the grant and use it on some other worthy project that can be completed by the deadline. Other sources of funding would then be needed for the trestle rehabilitation, such as the above-mentioned Cap-and-Trade program.

## Justification

The 5/12/15 memo lists justifications for the prefab bridge on page 5:

(1) Hydrology and Water Quality. The memo states "removal of the trestle to accommodate the new bridge would eliminate blockage that causes the water to back up at the trestle." The detailed modeling presented in the EIR (page 3.47, or p. 77 in the PDF) shows that the water level during a 100-year flood is changed by 0.6 feet (about 7 inches), and that it already is over 10 feet below the level of the bank (at elevation 119', given in Fig. 2-1 on PDF page 25).

Water quality is evaluated in Appendix D of the EIR: "Ecological Toxicology Report" (p. 159). The analysis concludes: "that leaving the pilings of the Three Creeks Bridge in place will not pose a risk to terrestrial or aquatic receptors." It also states: "Conversely, if removal is contemplated, ... pile removal projects must deploy best management practices (BMPs) to avoid or mitigate ... consequence[s] of the physical disturbance of pilings."

(2) Land Use. The memo states "the Retrofit Alternative would require higher operation and maintenance costs than the proposed project". Given that absolutely no maintenance is budgeted for the prefab bridge, of course any amount is higher. The Initial Study estimated maintenance to be about



\$20,000 once every five years, or about \$4,000/year. The community has offered to help the city defray this cost, and has already set up an account with the San José Parks Foundation. The Friends of the Willow Glen Trestle have thrown one fundraiser and already have collected two-years' worth of maintenance.

As a member of the Historic Landmarks Commission remarked, historic structures need maintenance. If maintenance-free is to be a requirement, then there would be no need for a Historic Landmarks Commission since there would be no historic structures. (The official audio record of the meeting is online at [http://sanjose.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view\\_id=54&clip\\_id=8100](http://sanjose.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=54&clip_id=8100).)

The statement in the memo, "The Retrofit Alternative also may pose greater environmental risks", is inconsistent with the Ecological Toxicology Report in EIR Appendix D.

(3) Transportation and Traffic. "[B]ridge closures may be needed during larger maintenance activities, to undertake future retrofit projects, and to repair fire damage of the trestle. These occasional closures would require trail users to take alternate routes across Los Gatos Creek". The Retrofit Alternative includes the plethora of fire-prevention features, so the only fire damage would that already there which would be repaired prior to opening the trail. The maintenance is budgeted for once every five years: for those few days twice a decade, having bicyclists and joggers go an extra two short blocks over to Lincoln and one longer block back is hardly a "traffic impact"!

(4) Biological Resources. "The biological impacts from the proposed project are also less than the bridge retrofit project, although only marginally. This is primarily due to the need to keep a 25-foot vegetation buffer around the wooden trestle."

- It is probably a good idea to keep the tree limbs trimmed away from the trestle.
- The tree limbs should also be trimmed away from the steel bridge, and so the environmental impact of trimming ranks equally for the two alternatives and is not a determining factor. Steel loses over 90% of its strength when heated to the temperature of a small campfire. (For example, see the paper entitled "Behavior of high strength structural steel at elevated temperatures", online at <http://ro.uow.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1345&context=engpapers>, which I cited in my comments to the EIR, p. 177 in the EIR Amendment.) In the response to my comment, "[t]he City agrees that fire risk is relevant to the design of a steel bridge." But the respondent goes on to state, as quoted in this 5/12/15 memo: "but the City responded that vegetation buffers are not required for steel bridges per the American Railway Engineering and Maintenance Association Manual of Railway Engineering." This is completely irrelevant: the heat from a burning clump of Arundo (giant reeds) may not heat the heavy steel girders of a bridge built to carry freight trains, but the structural beams of a prefab bike bridge are *considerably* lighter and far more susceptible to the effects of fire. At the very least, the effect should be analyzed.

(5) Cultural Resources. We fully expect the Council will follow the unanimous recommendation of the San José Landmarks Commission and grant the trestle City Landmark recognition. Stating that "[b]ecause the trestle does not qualify for the State or National Registers" is not a reason to demolish an important part of our local history. The Western Pacific played an important role in the founding of Willow Glen, and it had a profound impact during the Great Depression on San José as a whole. Please read the various submissions by Jean Dresden, local amateur historian, that have been submitted as part of the official record. (Ms. Dresden's documentation are included in the EIR Amendment and in the record of the Historic Landmarks Commission.) Her research documents how Southern Pacific had a

stranglehold on the local agricultural businesses in San José in the 1920s, and the arrival of competition from the Western Pacific Railroad forced Southern Pacific to greatly improve service and to reduce fees.

## EIR Comments

The 5/12/15 memo states that there were 54 comment letters submitted. A number of the comments, mostly in favor of the prefab bridge, were very short notes. At least one included a copy of an email from a Councilmember soliciting the comment. A number of these refer to the wish for improvements to a snack shack at the Willow Street/Bramhall Park Little League, which I recall is funded by private donations and is unconnected in any way to the trestle.

I submitted a rather extensive set of comments to the EIR. Many of the official replies to those comments are inadequate.

- A significant number of my questions of the EIR were dismissed with “[t]he commenter asks [number of] questions about [the trestle and the prefab bridge], but does not explain how these questions might influence the EIR’s determination of significance. Detailed responses are not required.”
- All my questions regarding the impact of fire on the prefab bridge were dismissed by citing the above-mentioned railroad manual; and
- All my questions regarding the trade matrix (EIR Appendix G, page 5.7), including inquiries on why points were shaved and padded to give the desired result, were dismissed with the blanket statement, “[f]or a discussion of the project costs, see Master Response 3”, which said “[f]or the purposes of the CEQA evaluation, costs are not relevant to either the impact analysis or to the determination of the environmentally preferred alternative” – it didn’t answer the questions that I’ve been raising for two years now.

I wonder if the judge overseeing the Friends of the Willow Glen Trestle suit would consider the responses adequate to show compliance with CEQA.

Regarding the photos of the existing conditions: yes, there are a couple rail ties that have deteriorated. Depending on the design of the trail decking for the retrofit, either the damaged ties could be replaced or all the ties would be removed. The city-commissioned engineering report of 2012 discusses the sash and brace beams, and documents which individual boards need to be unbolted and replaced. The cost of all these repairs are documented in detail in the engineering report, along with the number of bolts to replace, sprinkler heads for the fire-suppression system, etc. The overall total cost for repairing the trestle and adapting it for trail use, by the estimates in the engineering report, is roughly \$700,000 less than the cost of quickly removing it and replacing it with a basic-model prefab bridge. Even including a lifetime of inspections and repairs, the rehabilitated trestle is over a half million dollars less expensive than the prefab replacement bridge.

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Yes, the trestle is currently in disrepair and unsafe: even a brand new car with a broken turn signal is in disrepair and unsafe. The car, like the trestle, can readily be repaired, and for a lot less money than to replace it.

City designers and planners talk about “place-making” and the desire to have unique and iconic features that create interest and excitement. The prefab steel bridge would make an “adequate” trail connection, but people wouldn’t go out of their way to see it. Having a historic plaque or railroad medallions in the pavement wouldn’t help that much. A rehabilitated trestle, on the other hand, would make a great gateway to Willow Glen and would reinforce the area’s sense of history and uniqueness.

As discussed in the guest editorial in the San José Mercury News on May 13, 2015 ("*Larry Ames and Joe Horwedel: Trestle decision will speak to San Jose's character*"), [http://www.mercurynews.com/opinion/ci\\_28096305/larry-ames-and-joe-horwedel-trestle-decision-will](http://www.mercurynews.com/opinion/ci_28096305/larry-ames-and-joe-horwedel-trestle-decision-will), the City "will be deciding what type of city they want San Jose to be -- whether to settle for the merely adequately functional or whether to envision a city with some heart and soul."

Hopefully, on May 19th, the City Council will vote to accept the San José Historic Landmark Commission's unanimous recommendation that the Willow Glen Trestle be recognized as a City Landmark, and we won't get past the conditional clause ("If the Council confirms that the associated item on the Three Creeks Trail Trestle Bridge is not a historic landmark, then ...") on page 1 of the 5/12/15 memo.

Please feel free to contact me if I can provide any additional information.

~Larry Ames  
Friends of the Willow Glen Trestle



## Appendix

Several people have stated that the trestle supporters simply missed their opportunity to give timely comment, and that the process for public comment was properly followed.

The following is the letter I emailed to Mayor and Council on March 24, 2013 – two days prior to the first Council discussion. The acknowledging email indicates that the message was properly transmitted.

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From: [REDACTED]  
To: [REDACTED]  
Sent: 3/25/2013 8:30:52 A.M. Pacific Daylight Time  
Subj: RE: Council Agenda item 5.1, and the historic trestle on the Three Creeks Trail

Dear Dr. Ames,

Thank you for your e-mail to Mayor Reed and for sharing your thoughts and concerns regarding the grant applications to the State of California for the Three Creeks Trail pedestrian bridge development. We appreciate that you have reached out to our office, and I will share your comments with the Mayor and his senior staff for their review. Please don't hesitate to contact us with any additional comments or questions.

Sincerely,

**Richard Hong, Agenda Services Manager**  
Office of Mayor Chuck Reed | City of San José  
200 E. Santa Clara Street, 18th Floor | San José, CA 95113  
[REDACTED]

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From: [REDACTED]  
Sent: Sunday, March 24, 2013 9:29 AM  
To: [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

**Subject:** Council Agenda item 5.1, and the historic trestle on the Three Creeks Trail

Mayor and San Jose Councilmembers  
200 East Santa Clara  
San Jose, CA, 95113  
(sent via email)

re: historic trestle on the Three Creeks Trail

Dear Mayor Reed and San Jose Councilmembers,

Writing as an individual who has spent decades (literally!) working in support of the Los Gatos Creek Trail, Willow Glen, and historic preservation, along with a decade on the Three Creeks Trail, I endorse and applaud your efforts to apply for grants to provide a crossing of the Three Creeks Trail over the Los Gatos Creek (Council Agenda 3/26/13, item 5.1). However, I do not endorse Staff's recommendation that the existing historic train trestle be demolished and replaced with a new steel bridge.

The City commissioned and has received from CH2M-Hill a thorough engineering analysis of the existing trestle. The report finds that the trestle is structurally strong but does need some maintenance and repairs, and then it documents in detail which few piers need to be replaced and which beams need to be removed or patched. It goes on to recommend the "pre-cast concrete deck" option for the trail surface, saying that it would help protect the timbers and give a 35 - 50 year expected lifetime. The report says that a new steel bridge would be more expensive but should last somewhat longer. However, the reported 'big savings' is that the wood trestle would have to be inspected once every other year by two inspectors on a ladder whereas it would only take one inspector to look at the steel bridge. Regarding the 'difficult' creek clean-ups: we in the community have done this in the past using just garbage bags and a long rope. Smoke detectors or other remote sensors can protect against future fire damage. The engineering report gave no consideration to aesthetics or historic value.

A steel bridge could be beautiful, soaring across the riparian habitat just like the one upstream by Blackford Elementary. However, the train trestle is beautiful in its own way and in addition is so invocative of the long-gone "old wild west": the trestle is roughly 90 years old and has been there in Willow Glen since before it became a town. There are very few similar trestles in the area, and it is very unlikely that the City would ever build one just for a bike path.

The Staff report states that "[t]he historical character of the trestle structure is difficult to appreciate when on the structure". It doesn't mention that, going north, the planned trail is to make a sharp right turn and follow the bank, affording a great view of the bridge. And, just south of the bridge, the right-of-way is quite wide with space for the trail to weave to the side to afford a view and/or for a trail-side viewing area -- perhaps with a bench or picnic table.

The Staff report also states that the City was awarded "\$450,000 in grant funding from the Santa Clara Valley Water District (District) for improving the trestle that spans Los Gatos Creek": could the City even use this funding to instead demolish the trestle and replace it with a steel bridge?

Another question: has there been outreach to the historic preservation community, and to the community as a whole? For years, we have been featuring the trestle as the icon of the entire Three Creeks Trail.

The train trestle is truly a "hidden gem", seen by few in person: one can be within a block of it and not even know that there's this impressive 25-foot high trestle spanning a 210-foot wide chasm. It, like the steel bridge alternative, would provide trail continuity and afford a wonderful view of the healthy streamside habitat; but, unlike the steel alternative, the trestle would also invoke the history of the region when trains served all the canneries in the Valley of the Heart's Delight.

I support San Jose in seeking grants to improve the Three Creeks Trail, but I oppose Staff's recommendation to demolish the historic train trestle over the Los Gatos Creek.

Dr. Lawrence Ames

member, Los Gatos Creek Streamside Park Committee (1984-2000)

member, San Jose's Willow Glen Spur Trail Task Force (2009)

March 24, 2013

cc:

San Jose – Yves Zsutty, Julie Edmonds-Mares, Jennifer A. Maguire, Joe Horwedel, Matt Cano

Historic Preservation – Jim Zetterquist, Joan Bohnett, Jean Dresden, Marvin Bamburg

Santa Clara Valley Water District – Barbara Keegan, Teresa Alvarado

Trails – Michael LaRocca, Helen Chapman, Tai McMahon, Bill Rankin

Neighbors and Media – D6NLG, Barbara Marshman, Carol Rosen, Janice Rombeck

**Guzzetta, Suzanne**

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**From:** Severn Edmonds [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 19, 2015 9:23 AM  
**To:** City Clerk  
**Subject:** Save the Trestle

Greetings,

I fervently wish you will vote for our trestle and not be influenced by the inaccurate and biased stand that has been in circulation. Make it a good show and vote in response to our heartfelt belief that it would be so worthy to let it continue to serve a purpose that has great significance and function.

Native San Josean and Willow Glen resident,  
Severn Edmonds

**From:** Milton Chris Carris [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, May 18, 2015 11:40 PM  
**To:** City Clerk  
**Subject:** SAVE THE WILLOW GLEN TRESTLE!

To all of the Supervisors of the City of San Jose:

The Trestle of Willow Glen has served the people of the Santa Clara Valley of Hearts Delight for the better part of ninety years. Now the Willow Glen Trestle is in your hands as to whether it will serve another ninety years. In todays world it is too easy to dismiss the relevance of what our people did in the past to provide vital transportation links and commerce growth in the early days of the Santa Clara Valley.

The Willow Glen Trestle provided a way for early farmers and canneries to move the tons of raw fruit and canned fruit products to the rest of the country and world. Now it is necessary to re-make the trestle as a foot bridge and bicycle bridge, but more importantly a statement to the efforts of the early American railroads, the early American farmers and ranchers, and the early American cannery industry in the Santa Clara Valley.

Trestles and especially the Willow Glen Trestle is one of the few that can be used for another purpose, the bike and hiking trail. At the same time the trestle offers a REAL view into our past. It shows the determination and the power of the people of Santa Clara Valley to provide a REAL solution and answer to requirements facing early development of San Jose, Willow Glen, and the South Bay Area.

Yes, some, might look at the Willow Glen Trestle as and ordered pile of wood or sticks but it is more than that. It is the hopes and dreams of many of us early Santa Clara Valley people making our mark in this valley. Quietly, steadily, earnestly, determined to show all we can do what it takes! So quietly, and with determination a wood structure capable of

holding up tons of train and the tons of product carried, in the back ground of a small seasonal stream did its job.

We ask (heartily demand) the City of San Jose, supervisors save the Willow Glen Trestle for us who lived and remember the reasons it was built and used in the first place. But also for our children and those who have just arrived in the Santa Clara Valley to know there was a life we lived in the past and did what was necessary to provide for all of us!

Sincerely,

Milton Chris Carris (resident in the Willow Glen/Campbell/San Jose area for 62 years and former owner of the Willow glen Coffee Roasting Company)



**Guzzetta, Suzanne**

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**From:** Smita Patel [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, May 18, 2015 10:59 PM  
**To:** City Clerk  
**Subject:** Please forward to Mayor and City Council

Dear Mayor Liccardo and Members of the Council:

My parents and I have been citizens for San Jose for more than three decades. We love this city and therefore I am writing to urge you to accept the unanimous recommendation of the SJ Historic Landmarks Commission to declare the Willow Glen Trestle a city landmark. Even though we do not live in the Willow Glen area, we believe the trestle is exactly the kind of thing we should treasure and celebrate. It would be tragic to replace it with a prefab metal bridge! Please consider the retrofit option instead. That trestle brings charm and character to our city - something we keep losing in our increasingly homogenized landscape of strip malls and chain stores that all look just the same. (I realize we need those, too, but at least keep the trestle to offset that a bit.)

Thanks for your time and attention.

Sincerely,  
Smita Patel  
Rasik Patel  
Surjeet Patel  
[REDACTED]  
San Jose, Ca 95139

**Guzzetta, Suzanne**

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**From:** Richard Nieset [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, May 18, 2015 10:17 PM  
**To:** City Clerk  
**Subject:** Save the Willow Glenn Trestle

Please forward this message to Mayor Liccardo and all of the San Jose City Council Members

Dear Mayor Liccardo and Members of the San Jose City Council,

I am unable to attend today's session because of conflicts with my job, however I have been following this issue for years and have been an active advocate for preservation of the Willow Glenn trestle. Please accept this note as a representation of my very strong support for preserving the Trestle in preference to replacing it with a steel bridge. Those that stand with me on this request have carefully presented the facts and details, and eloquently articulated why preservation is a good idea. I do feel the EIR is technically flawed, and I FULLY support the views of those on the side of preservation.

As citizens we place our trust in you, our elected officials, to protect and preserve our resources. This trestle is a historic resource that needs your protection. Please consider your actions regarding preservation very carefully as once it's gone, it's gone and it will very much be a sad day when history becomes something abstract that is referenced only in books, plaques and photographs.

Thank you,

Richard H. Nieset

[REDACTED]  
San Jose

--

Richard Nieset

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [mayoremail@sanjoseca.gov](mailto:mayoremail@sanjoseca.gov) ; [Charles "Chappie" Jones](#) ; [Ash Kalra](#) ; [Raul Peralez](#) ; [Margie Matthews](#) ; [Magdalena Carrasco](#) ; [Pierluigi Oliverio](#) ; [Tam Nguyen](#) ; [Rose Herrera](#) ; [Don Rocha](#) ; [Johnny Khamis](#)  
**Cc:** [john.davidson@sanjoseca.gov](mailto:john.davidson@sanjoseca.gov)  
**Sent:** Friday, May 15, 2015 10:30 AM  
**Subject:** Trestle/Three Creeks TYrail

Mr. Mayor and Councilmembers:

Well, I hear that Mr. Ames and his small coterie of self-appointed Guardians of the Galaxy still refuse to stop their tax draining clamor for saving The Trestle. Not content with diverting hundreds of thousands of tax dollars to defend against their ill-conceived cause, they will once again ask the Council to save a structure that has value to them and them alone. Apparently they believe that they know more than the experts who have declared The Trestle to be non-historic. In fact, they seem to believe that they know better than anyone else what's best for all of us, a hallmark of folks like Mr. Ames and his fellow guardians of what's old, right, and holy. Their continuing appeals are beginning to resemble the endless death penalty appeals conducted in California. Will it ever end? Perhaps if Mr. Ames and his admirers had to pay the full cost of their endless attempts to force their beliefs on the rest of us, Mr. Ames and his fellows would know when to say when. But no, they apparently will continue to waste the time and energy of the Mayor, Council, and Staff by coming before you yet again, despite the great weight of the evidence of the negative effects of The Trestle on wildlife and the negative fiscal consequences of their seemingly endless crusade. Talk about tyranny of the minority! Frankly, until logging on to councilmember Oliverio's website recently, I had no idea where The Trestle is, although I have lived in Willow Glen since 1980, half of that less than one mile away from it. I daresay less than 1% of the residents of San Jose could identify its location either. The great weight of the evidence puts Mr. Ames and his fanatical supporters on the wrong side of the environmental "back fence" on this issue. It's long past the time to put an end to the endless maneuverings of the Save the Trestle crew and move ahead with demolition and replacement. You can stop the fiscal bleeding on this issue, and the fish will thank you too.

JohnMichael O'Connor  
Willow Glen

**From:** Scott Lane [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 19, 2015 10:18 AM  
**To:** City Clerk  
**Subject:** Please save the WG Trestle & Help Us Create an Amazing 5.3 mile 3CT/Five Wounds Trail and LGCT into DTSJ!

Mr Mayor and City Council Members -

Many of us have been involved with making San Jose a better place to live, work and play for years and even decades. Through all of this we remain steadfast that San Jose can go back to the right process here and save history, create a Renaissance in the area between Willow Glen, speed up the Three Creeks Trail connection as well as save money!

**Please Save the WG Trestle, Agree to start the process for City Landmark Status and "green light us" to help restore this wonderful Historic resource ASAP!**

We want to save the WG Trestle and ensure we have Trail Connectivity as soon as possible. We can accomplish both - if SJ Parks & Recreation will join us!

I do hope that you have read the SJ Mercury News Editorial earlier today:

[Mercury News editorial: Willow Glen Trestle should be saved](#)

They really nailed it. It is not too late to do the right thing!

We can all work together to make this an area, a region, a trail that can bring a love of place and history, something magical like the Riverwalk in San Antonio as well as speed up the Trail connection to Three Creeks Trail and Five Wounds Trail. Saving the WG Trestle will be cheaper, faster and provide much better VALUE than the catalog ordered Bike/Ped bridge.

OpEd from former Planning Director Joe Horwedel & Dr. Larry Ames:

[Larry Ames and Joe Horwedel: Trestle decision will speak to San Jose's character](#)

If Joe (as the former Director of Planning, Building and Code Enforcement of SJ) can have a change of heart about this whole process, I think that speaks volumes!

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There certainly was another OpEd by Council Member Pierluigi Oliverio and Tai McMahon.

[Taisia McMahon and Pierluigi Oliverio: Don't let trestle derail the Three Creeks Trail](#)

Unfortunately:

This was full of many misunderstandings and significant factual errors, that have been the hallmark of what the City of San Jose has engaged in as the City Staff and Council Member have doubled and tripled down on the decision to violate city policies and procedures. (and retelling errors/mistatements).

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**We seek to find partners to help with the WG Trestle and Three Creeks Trail (and Five Wounds Trail):**

I was one of the finalists out of 7,000 entries for "[Crowdsourcing Three Creeks Trail Design, Development and Maintenance](#)"

County of Santa Clara has committed to providing the Parks & Recreation expertise as well as assistance from the Historical Heritage Commission, Roads & Airports personnel, etc. This was a unanimous vote and would be provided free of charge. Let's take them up on the offer and continue discussions to determine what funding options are there. And please take them up on the offer to help negotiate with UPRR so that we may "land bank" the rest of the Eastern Alignment.

We are also seeking funding from the County to help acquire the Eastern Alignment of the Three Creeks Trail as well as saving the WG Trestle! And please take them up on the offer to help negotiate with UPRR so that we may "land bank" the rest of the Eastern Alignment.

We are also seeking MTC and State funds since the Three Creeks Trail and the Five Wounds Trail will create a 5.3 mile off street trail via the "J-hook" of the former Western Pacific Railroad right of way to the Alum Rock @ 28th St BART station that we have been active in supporting and saving from being changed.

We are seeking individual and corporate support for both the Trestles and the Trails. This includes executives from Europe that are accustomed to older structures as well as "off street" ways to commute.

Let's find out what new zoning from the Planning Department and working with Kim and Nanci in the City Manager's office/OED can help jumpstart!

Via the San Jose Parks Foundation and individual fund raisers we have developed an Inspection and Maintenance Fund.

We would prefer that this money be spent on the restored and refurbished WG Trestle (that will be capable of handling more than one half million pounds of train and cargo) instead of for lawsuits.

Why do we feel confident that we can do all of this?

Because the Robert Z'Berg funds, their extension and most of the money (as well as the name Three Creek Trail) to save the Union Pacific Railroad land from being sold was due to Dr. Larry Ames (quietly, without fanfare using his connections that he's made via over three decades of volunteering) to make it all come together with the County and Open Space Authority.

**There are many valid concerns that have been brought up:**

The creosote timbers can be kept in place; in fact the "eddys" that these create are good for fish. They are solid. Consider that BART has changed their routing into downtown San Jose to avoid creosote pilings.

If BART does not want to pull out pilings and feels they're safe to leave in the water, why is San Jose in such a rush to tear them out?!?

The bridge that has been purchased can be repurposed elsewhere to replace the recent vintage bike/pedestrian bridge that has been closed for safety reasons. (which shows one example of how modern is not always better.

The flood control aspects of the region are better with the WG Trestle. The 100 year flood plain is ten feet below and the fact that the WG Trestle can stop debris is akin to a goalie for the Sharks!

The "back of the net" is the next bridge, where it will surely flood if any major tree or debris gets jammed up there. It is much narrower and shallower.

**Please note:**

For years, San Jose said they would retrofit the WG Trestle. The switch was a dramatic change with ambiguous language.

San Jose had a \$650k grant (\$450k + \$200k match from SJ) from SCVWD specifically for restoration of the WG Trestle.

There was the 2004 EIR that could have been used for the WG Trestle retrofit. It discussed the impacts to the Creek and some of what would have to be done to mitigate it.

The Guadalupe River (downstream from Los Gatos Creek's Confluence with the Guadalupe) has a modern steel and concrete Trestle design by the Target at Market Center on Coleman. It was it's piers in the water. The typical water flow there where it is 1/4-1/3 the width would be approximately 4x higher than at the WG Trestle.

The retrofit option for the WG Trestle that CH2M-HILL was an engineering solution that is lacking in both aesthetics as well as historical sensitivity. There are alternative ways to meet the engineering end goals but ensure that the WG Trestle does not lose its City Landmark eligibility as well as providing a solution for less money. *Further, this needs to go out to bid!*

**Bottom Line:**

It is not too late to do the right thing! We all look forward to working with you all and any time lost to switch gears can be caught up with better teamwork with the neighborhood/environmentalist that continue to make San Jose a better place to live, work and play.

And please, contact State Senator Jim Beall's office and get that extension on the Robert Z'Berg Prop 40 grant. He has been waiting to be contacted by San Jose officials for months to make this happen!

All the best,

Scott Lane

(I'm writing this letter on my own behalf, but am a Board Member of the Friends of WG Trestle, PAC\* SJ, Silicon Valley Bike Coalition, Executive Director of Vision Zero Now! and a former Board Member of Save Our Trails. As well as a volunteer in SJ for over 30 years)